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CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY



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From the Editor-in-Chief

From the Editor-in-Chief

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One theme that emerges from the contributions with which our authors (and peer reviewers) have graced this issue is the inter-relationships between armed forces and Canadian society. Robert Vineberg, a graduate of the University of Toronto and Carleton University who became a senior public servant, examines both the positive and negative influences of the British Army garrison in Montreal during the mid-nineteenth century. Mathias Joost, of the Directorate of History and Heritage, and Simon Theobald, a University of Ottawa graduate, and research consultant, have examined the policy and practices of the Canadian forces in enlisting members of visible minorities during the Second World War. The two papers, both of which focus on the Royal Canadian Air Force, have different perspectives, but agree that ministers, senior officers and the personnel managers came to realize that exclusionary policies put in place in the late 1930s and early in the Second World War did not reflect the values many Canadians espoused.

A second theme in the issue is "historians at work." J.L. Granatstein has supplied us with another installment from his research files. His notes of interviews with Sylvain Cloutier and General Jacques Dextraze about their roles in the reorganization of the defence department and armed forces in the 1970s appeared in Spring 2011 (volume 20, number 2). In the present issue we have Jack's notes on interviews with Generals Stanley Todd and William Ziegler, two senior artillery officers with the Canadian

Army overseas during the Second World War.

We have included my own memoir about my first job, as a junior historian at the Directorate of History. My initial assignment was to examine the role of the Royal Canadian Air Force in the defence of the Gulf of St. Lawrence against U-boat attacks in 1942. These memoirs were the first thing I set down when I began work on *War in the St. Lawrence*, which has just been published. The editors wisely suggested I greatly compress the memoir material for the book, and publish the original full version in a venue for military historians. I had circulated drafts of the material to several senior scholars who provided corrections and other improvements, and urged me to pursue publication. Mike Bechthold then badgered me to revise the piece for publication, even as he scheduled it for this issue, and responded to my whining about the tortures of reworking my own tortured prose by refusing to change the schedule.

Laura Brandon of the Canadian War Museum has submitted a revised version of her Shannon lecture at Carleton University last year. The piece is in some respects a personal intellectual history in which Laura examines her own reaction, and the reaction of others, to war artist Gertrude Kearns's powerful painting *What They Gave*. The work is built from Kearns's own time in Afghanistan during which an attack by a suicide bomber destroyed two Canadian Forces vehicles, with heavy casualties among the occupants. Kearns witnessed the

terrible aftermath, and assisted at the Canadian Forces hospital.

The Canadian War Museum section also includes a full treatment of one of the museum's treasures, the last letter written by Private Leslie Abram Neufeld of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion before he was killed during the first day of the Normandy landings, 6 June 1944. This piece was researched and written by British historian, radio and television producer Siân Price in the course of her work on a radio documentary and book on last letters from the battle fronts in wartime. As I have often said in these pages, one of the primary purposes of the museum's collection is to inspire this kind of research and analysis – and we are all the richer for Ms. Price's work.

Roger Sarty
February 2012